



Knowing Yourself as an Educator

Why go this route?

- Because teaching is an art, and artists work from inner visions, seeking ways to embody them and make them visible to others.
- Because Michigan's enormous effort to increase rigor and agreement on **content standards** must be balanced by equal rigor about **instructional practice** if we are to maximize student learning.
- Because unexamined preferences, strengths, and styles will inadvertently interfere in your ability to help ALL children learn.
- Because being explicit about your values helps hold them steady and consistent so children can trust and lean on them.

You'll know you've arrived when...

- You know the values/beliefs you intend to model.
- You know your personality type/temperament and its implications for teaching.
- You have an action plan for how you intend to learn/grow and/or compensate for your biases, and a way to check on your progress in carrying it out.

Construction Zone

- This is the first (of six) packets in a full instructional design & delivery cycle outlined in MI-Map packets. See Packets 5:2 to 5:6 for the others.



- This packet is designed as a reflective process that individual teachers (or administrators) could use to surface assumptions and values so they can be explicitly managed. A grade-level team might use it together... or a full staff at an August retreat.



It's about TIME

- Steps 1-7 could be completed in a 2-3 hour reflective journaling or training session.
- Step 8 is a practice to use periodically during a teaching year to get feedback from kids. It would take roughly 15 min.




Potential COST

- Taking one of the suggested personality inventories on-line would cost \$10-15. Buying books to read more about any of them would cost another \$10-15 each.

The Process

A step-by-step guide to knowing yourself better as an educator.

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

- 1 Take reflective time to identify core values** you want to model consistently throughout the year. INSERT for Step 1 is a worksheet with a starter set of values to catalyze your thinking.
 - 2 Name 2-3 beliefs about how teaching/learning happen** based on what experience has taught you. Flag for yourself the implications for your teaching practice. Use INSERT for Step 2.
 - 3 Use a personality inventory** to locate your temperament. This helps you see choices which look inevitable to you, but which others—including your learners—could see differently. Once you know your own choices instead of struggling with the differences, you can include them.

Many such tools exist. Some Michigan schools use a framework built around a set of four TEMPERAMENTS. See INSERT A for Step 3 to see an overview of those four temperaments and a list of authors, facilitators and organizations that will help you locate yourself among them. If a group is doing this, make a poster and have people self-locate in the quadrant most like them.

Others are familiar with their four-letter self-description from the popular Meyers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). A free on-line version of the inventory can be found at similarminds.com. INSERT B for Step 3 correlates these sixteen personality TYPES to the four TEMPERAMENTS above, since we use the temperaments later in this instructional cycle.
 - 4 Assess your strengths and weaknesses** as a teacher.

Use INSERT for Step 4 to reflect on what you know about yourself. Pick one element of your teacher's "skill kit" at the bottom of the page. Locate that skill along the "Strong>>>Weak" continuum... then ask yourself how important you think this element is for good teaching. Move vertically along the "Important>>>Not So Important" scale. Jot that word down where it fits on both scales. Continue with other elements. The resulting "map" of your skills might show you both STRENGTHS to capitalize on... and GAPS to work at developing further.
 - 5 Ask a trusted colleague to give you feedback** on your teaching. Use and discuss INSERT for Step 5.
 - 6 Look back over what you've noticed** from all the sources above. Distill from your reflections an Action Plan that summarizes 1-3 things you want to change or work on this year. Use INSERT for Step 7.

Remember, research and change theory suggest three things. Your change effort will be more successful if you: 1) go small and build on a sense of success... 2) have compassion and curiosity rather than judgment about what you're trying to change and... 3) invent a visual reminder/cue to post where you'll be nudged to try new behavior.
 - 7 Ask your kids.** INSERT for Step 8 offers a method called "Three by Three by Three" which uses 3x5 cards to ask kids for three positives and three negatives about a particular lesson or practice. Consider using it routinely to see what they can tell you about yourself.
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Getting more mileage from increasing self-knowledge

How knowing yourself as an educator benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

- NCLB implementation and accountability is focused on individual buildings. With the increase in responsibility and visibility, educators must be more secure in their role. They need to identify who they are, why they want to be educators and what they believe they can do to improve student achievement. Only through self understanding can educators meet the increasing stress associated with accepting responsibility for the increased achievement of each and every student.

Education YES!

- *Indicators of Instructional Quality* include professional development and extended learning opportunities. Use this series of packets to structure those around a systematic way of inviting an entire staff to reflect on its instructional design and delivery practices... and to develop action plans for self-directed change.



Resources

Books

Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type

Isabel Briggs Myers, Peter Myers.
Davies-Black Publishers, 1995. Paperback

Isabel and her mother, Katherine Briggs, are the conceptualizers of this popular, Jungian-based framework. This gentle and encouraging book explains and values all 16 types.

Please Understand Me: Character and Temperament Types

David Keirsey, Marilyn Bates.
Prometheus Nemesis Book Co.,
1984. Paperback.

Keirsey's framework is simpler—4 temperaments instead of 16 types. What's lost in specificity is probably gained in ease of remembering and talking to each other about them. A questionnaire is included.

Showing Our True Colors

Mary Miscisin, Jeff Haines.
True Colors, Inc. 2001. Paperback.

This book explores the four "colors" (temperaments). Very useful for young people and adults alike.

People

Specialists

Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc. can recommend certified facilitators who administer and interpret the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory (MBTI). Contact them at:

800/624-1765
www.mbti.com

Coaches

The Alliance for Building Capacity in Schools website lists coaches trained by MSU, and supported by the Michigan Department of Education. Some are experienced in instructional design in Michigan schools. Please visit:

www.abcscoaches.org

Resource Person for Instructional Design and Delivery series of packets

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Free On-Line Diagnostics

www.similarminds.com

This on-line questionnaire offers instant scoring, showing the strength of MBTI's four paired attributes and how they combine into one of sixteen 4-letter personality TYPES.

www.keirsey.com

This on-line "Keirsey Sorter" is a shorter questionnaire which points to one of four TEMPERAMENTS. (A print version is included in [Please Understand Me](#)).

www.truecolors.org

A free demo offers a quick questionnaire that identifies the relative strength of each of four "colors" which correspond to Keirsey's four temperaments.

For more information, contact

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